

Paul Urges Commerce Department to Investigate Foreign Shrimp Subsidies

Washington, DC: Congressman Ron Paul recently joined several of his House colleagues urging action by the Commerce Department to protect the troubled domestic shrimp industry. Paul and other members of Congress, who represent thousands of shrimpers in Texas and Louisiana, sent a letter to Commerce Secretary Donald Evans and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick demanding an investigation into taxpayer subsidies that benefit foreign shrimpers at the expense of our domestic industry.

The 14th congressional district is home to many shrimpers, from Galveston to Aransas counties. Since 2000, shrimp imports from targeted countries have increased a whopping 72%, while prices have fallen 35% in the same period. This flood of subsidized imported shrimp has drastically reduced revenues for the vital Gulf coast shrimp industry.

“Domestic shrimpers up and down the Texas Gulf coast have been devastated by cheap imported shrimp,” Paul stated. “Congress needs to remove the burdensome regulations that make it so difficult for our shrimpers to make a profit, but we also need to eliminate foreign aid subsidies to the nations that compete directly with our shrimp industry. It’s unconscionable that a struggling shrimper in south Texas has to pay taxes that subsidize his foreign competitors.”

Paul introduced the “Shrimp Importation Fairness Act” in January 2003 to help level the playing field between the foreign and domestic shrimp industries. The bill places a moratorium on costly federal regulations that hamper the domestic industry, while ending taxpayer subsidies to seven countries responsible for nearly 70% of the imported shrimp consumed in the U.S.